

CHAPTER 5: THE FLATHEAD ECONOMY

Comment:	Staff Response:
<p>FVCC as a resource for economic & workforce development should be noted under Goal 20. FVCC adds value to the economy by training skilled workers, works with employers, adds enrichment to the residents of the valley, makes an economic contribution to the economy through wages and making this an even more attractive place. Plus FVCC is a community college and reacts quickly to changing community needs. (FVCC has 40 occupational programs right now.)</p>	<p>Add policy P.20.7: <i>Coordinate and communicate with Flathead Valley Community College as well as local businesses to actively maintain a workforce that can serve a diverse spectrum of industries and employers.</i></p>
<p>Page 56 Part I—Economic Composition It is stated that Flathead County should take appropriate measures to create a market-friendly environment and promote entrepreneurship and small-business investment. This is fine and admirable but why shouldn't Flathead County also take appropriate measures to promote the wood products industry which is shown in Figure 5.1 as the largest wage income for the basic economic sectors in Flathead County. Perhaps something like a billboard explaining the importance to the county of the log trucks on the road or a right to practice forestry regulation could be adopted.</p>	<p>See Goal G.3 and associated policies in Chapter 2: Land Uses.</p>
<p>p.54: the policies for Goal G.20 are also very well written.</p> <p>Figure 5.5 (p 60) is unclear and unreferenced in the text.</p>	<p>Rewrite first sentence of page 59 to read, "Flathead County wages are rising, as shown in Figure 5.5." Move the first paragraph of page 60 to page 59 and enlarge Figure 5.5 to increase clarity and utility.</p>
<p>Education and Workforce (P.20.4). The importance of this issue area is understated in the document. There is a growing crisis in the availability of skilled workers. This challenge is identified by Flathead County businesses as their top priority and is the most frequently request area for business assistance. We must ensure that our education and workforce skills meet those being demanded by employers today and in the future. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce offers to assist you through initiatives like Workforce 2020 and Business Education Partnership, which are working to leverage the influence of member companies to help shape local and state education and workforce policies to meet this challenge.</p> <p>Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development (P.20.3). More emphasis should be placed on the development of small business and entrepreneurs as a strategy for creating a healthy and vibrant economy. "Home grown" businesses have a higher affinity for an area and account for 80-90 percent of job growth in the typical market. The Small Business Development Center and the Flathead</p>	<p>See above policy.</p> <p>Rewrite Policy P.20.3: <i>Encourage land use policies that allow for small business development and entrepreneurial activities as methods to provide employment, locally produced goods and services to meet the needs and demands of local communities, provide region-specific export goods, and strengthen the local market.</i></p>

Regional Business Center can assist in this endeavor.	
<p>Flathead Counties growth policy can be most effective in protecting health, safety, morals, convenience, and general welfare by addressing and promoting the economic status of its citizens. The information in the Housing section is particularly telling of the dismal situation regarding the chasm between Flathead County median home price and median annual household income. The economy section in the Policy should also disclose the real cost of living trend in the Flathead compared to the national average. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry has lots of data, such as the fact that Montana has ranked last in the nation for years in average annual wage/job, and that Montana is one of the highest ranked states in the nation for number of jobs per worker. The demographic data in the Draft Policy discloses the gap in 18-35 year old population age group (p.36), but there is no disclosure of the economic conditions described above which forces our young families to move out of state to earn enough to raise a family. To the credit of the draft authors, you at least disclosed one meaningful record showing the historic decline and recent increases in the rate of change in Flathead County average earning per job compared to the national average.</p> <p>In short, the economic picture portrayed in the Draft Policy appears to promote the biased National Parks Conservation Association sponsored publications by the Sonoran Institute and Dr. Larry Swanson. These publications only show the rapidly rising total employment, income, and revenues carefully crafted to portray a wonderful immigration driven growth economy presented in a way to support assumptions that the sponsors paid to promote. The underlying assumptions these publications support are that recent in-migration, economic growth, and all hunting, fishing and other outdoor sports revenues is primarily a result of people choosing to live in close proximity and recreate within National Parks, wilderness and roadless areas. Monitoring data of where people actually recreate does not support these assumptions (e.g. USFS studies show less than 2% of recreation visits in the Flathead National Forest occur in Wilderness areas). There is no doubt that advertising of the Flathead and Glacier Country all over the world by the tourism industry is a huge factor in exposing a lot of people to residential opportunities here and contributes to acceleration of in-migration. If Flathead County wants to know why people are choosing to move here, the County would not rely on publications by special interest groups, instead an unbiased</p>	<p>These data do not exist.</p> <p>This level of detail is outside of the scope of this document.</p> <p>Staff disagrees with comment and asserts the objectivity of referenced documents.</p>

<p>scientific survey would be commissioned to find out from recent immigrants why they did choose to move here.</p> <p>Unfortunately the bias exhibited in the economic sections of the policy is closely intertwined with the Growth Policy presentations of natural resources including forest and agricultural land uses. The future supply of timber from Federal lands is probably the biggest threat to the future of Flathead County's diverse economy. There is no disclosure of the long-term timber supply problem and loss of income to Flathead County posed by two decades of inadequate management of Federal timberlands. Instead the Policy land use section describes the recent few years upsurge in timber sales as if this is normal production from the National Forest, not even mentioning that recent volume is primarily salvage of a tiny portion of the 200,000 + acres burned in catastrophic fires in the last 5 years. The long-term timber harvest record should be shown along with a discussion of the critical timber supply need that Federal lands must sustain if current 22% of Flathead County wage income provided by wood products industry is to continue in the future. Supply from State and private lands simply cannot sustain the wood products industry we currently have.</p> <p>Yes, the Flathead economy is diverse (pp53) but it should be noted that this diversity is rapidly disappearing as our manufacturing goes in the tank. <u>Please add:</u></p> <p>P.20.7 Promote and protect traditional flathead industries in order to maintain economic diversity and high paying jobs.</p> <p>On page 55 you list retail trade as a basic industry. However only that small portion of retail trade that goes to shoppers from outside the county is basic and then only as far as the county is concerned. Retail trade is primarily a non-basic industry – dollars are shipped out to suppliers elsewhere.</p>	<p>See Goal G.3 of Chapter 2: Land Uses.</p> <p>See Goal G.3 of Chapter 2: Land Uses.</p> <p>Perhaps: P.20.9: <i>Support the continuation of traditional and existing industries to maintain economic diversity.</i></p> <p>See Policy P.20.3 which addresses encouraging local small business development.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION: Revise Chapter 5-Goal 20-Policy 2: Develop methods to sustain a viable and adaptive agricultural economy into the future through community-based incentives for farmers to continue to perform and experiment with a variety of agricultural activities.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Add Chapter 5-Goal 20-Policy: Implement programs which will assist the business of agriculture. Programs may include establishing Agricultural Enterprise Zones which could provide flexibility and incentives for farmers</p>	<p>Rewrite Policy P.20.2: <i>Develop methods to sustain a viable and adaptive agricultural economy through community-based incentives.</i></p> <p>See Goal G.4 of Chapter 2: Land Uses.</p>

<p>to invest in new buildings and equipment.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Revise Chapter 5-Goal 20-Policy 4: Foster small business development and entrepreneurial activities as methods to provide locally produced goods and services to meet the needs and demands of local communities; to ensure food security for Flathead County residents in times of uncertainty; and to provide regional specialty export goods.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Add Chapter 5-Goal 20-Policy: Give priority to establishing infrastructure and opportunities to increase value-added agricultural products and permanent processing and marketing facilities for meat and other agricultural products in the Flathead including securing funding sources on the state and national level.</p>	<p>See recommended policy revision above.</p> <p>This level of detail is outside of the scope of this document.</p>
<p>The Flathead economy is often driven by decisions within the 3 local cities. City infrastructure often holds the key to attracting businesses and services. Many of the goals and policies of Chapter 5 are probably city issues as opposed to county issues. Perhaps the goals should recognize the need to coordinate economic development opportunities with the other local government jurisdictions in the county.</p> <p>Under the narrative, healthcare should be recognized as a basic industry. In table 5.2 and in previous narrative, it should be noted that KRMC is the largest single employer in the county and Plum Creek should be included under the manufacturing heading with over 1,000 employees. Columbia Falls Aluminum has fewer than 500 employees.</p> <p>Under Part 5, some discussion should reference the real estate industry (that would include sales brokers, leasing agents, escrow and title service companies, and the associated building industry) and the value of the second home market. The Realty Association and Building Association should be able to get you annual sales information to help with the discussion.</p>	<p>See the goals of Chapter 11: Statement of Coordination.</p> <p>The Manufacturing section of Table 5.2 should be revised to include Plum Creek Timber Company and omit Columbia Falls Aluminum.</p> <p>The following statement should be added to Part 3: Business Characteristics: <i>Kalispell Regional Medical Center is the largest employer with roughly 1600 employees.</i></p> <p>This level of detail is outside of the scope of this document.</p>
<p>Chapter #5 discusses the economy of the Flathead. All sectors of the economy are important to have a viable, healthy community. Centering efforts around a small business and new small business investments while ignoring the needs of existing businesses who provide good wages and benefits is not appropriate. Our Company puts almost 26 million in the Flathead economy last year. (Copy enclosed) The Growth Policy must recognize this contribution.</p>	<p>See recommended policy P.20.9 above.</p>
<p>Add "services" to G.21. The infrastructure that supports business is more than physical things like</p>	<p>Revise G.21 to include services.</p>

roads and sewer systems. It is also services like medical care and education.	
<p>It is difficult to assess what the loss of our farms and the farm economy to our county would be, but though our farm community is beleaguered, it is vibrant, and, with community support, it can grow and continue to make a significant contribution to the community.</p> <p>Our present choice can be stated simply. We can take control of the future Flathead County agriculture and the contribution it can make to the lives of our children and grand children, or we can turn that future over to “out-of-town” developers whose interest in our Valley, beyond their short-term-profit, is unlikely.</p> <p>Tax incentives, such as new tax programs, tax breaks or new methods of tax assessment.</p> <p>Economic development, which means helping landowners and agricultural producers find new ways to market their products or develop coalitions and groups that can generate new ways to keep agriculture and forestry viable ways to earn a living.</p>	See Goal G.4 of Chapter 2: Land Uses.
<p>Policy and regulation which include things like planning, impact fees and zoning.</p> <p>Independent businesses have long been the backbone of the American economy and way of life. They play a critical role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the American Dream alive. For generations, starting a small business has been a key means by which families have pulled themselves out of low-wage jobs and into the middle-class. • Building strong communities. Studies show that small businesses contribute more of their revenue to charitable causes than big businesses. • Countering sprawl, reducing traffic, and protecting open space. Local businesses favor locations in downtowns and neighborhood business districts. These compact areas are less costly in terms of public infrastructure and services, compared to sprawling, auto-oriented shopping centers, the development of which can precipitate a rise in local tax rates. • Strengthening local economies. Local businesses re-spend a much larger share of their revenue within the local economy compared to national chains, creating more jobs and opportunities. 	See Policy P.20.3 on encouraging small business development.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting consumer interests. A marketplace of tens of thousands of independent businesses is the best way to ensure innovation, broad product choices, and low prices over the long-term. Ensuring long-term economic stability. Communities with economies composed of many small businesses focused primarily on serving local needs are more diversified and stable than those dependent on a few large firms, and less vulnerable to distant economic forces. <p>Yet, despite their importance, independent businesses are rapidly disappearing as fewer and larger corporations increasingly dominate almost every sector of the economy. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the demise of independent businesses is not the inevitable result of market forces and consumer choices. Public policy at all levels of government has played a major role in fueling the growth of large corporations at the expense of America's independent small businesses.</p>	
<p>To level the playing field and allow small businesses to originate and flourish, we advocate the following policies (for federal, state, and local policies):</p> <p>FEDERAL</p> <p>Antitrust</p> <p>Strengthen and enforce federal laws that prohibit predatory pricing and price discrimination.</p> <p>Preventing large retailers and large industry from misusing their size and market power to gain an unfair advantage over their smaller competitors is essential to protecting consumers and ensuring independent business an opportunity to compete.</p> <p>Community Reinvestment</p> <p>Support and strengthen the Community Reinvestment Act.</p> <p>Since the 1970s, the Community Reinvestment Act has required banks to invest and make loans in low- and moderate-income areas. The CRA has an impressive track record in spurring small business development and community revitalization. Yet several attempts are underway to significantly weaken and even abolish the law. In particular, some banking regulators and lawmakers want to exempt certain size classes of banks and savings associations from the CRA. Moreover, the CRA's</p>	<p>Per Section 76-1-605(1a), MCA, this is a non-regulatory document. Therefore, many of the following comments are outside the scope of this document. Relevant comments are addressed.</p>

provisions have not been extended to mutual funds, pension plans, and other non-bank entities that now account for a majority of the financial industry's assets.

Financing

Fully fund the Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan guarantee program, which provides critical capital for independent businesses.

The 7(a) loan guarantee program is the largest source of long-term working capital for small businesses in the nation, accounting for some 40 percent of available financing. Much like federal home mortgage guarantees, much of this financing would not be available without the 7(a) program. The program's future, however, has been threatened by recent policy changes and funding cuts.

Local authority

Reject any international trade treaty that prohibits cities and states from favoring local businesses in government contracts and purchases.

A number of cities and states have enacted policies that give preference to local businesses when awarding government contracts, provided the bid from the local business is within a certain range of the lowest bid received. Provisions in some proposed international trade agreements could overturn these preferences.

Sales tax

Enact legislation requiring all retailers to comply with state and local sales tax regulations if it becomes applicable.

Federal policy currently prohibits states and communities from requiring internet and mail-order companies to collect the same sales taxes that local retailers are required to charge. This policy gives out-of-state companies a five- to eight – percentage price advantage over local stores.

State

Antitrust

Strengthen and enforce state laws that prohibits predatory pricing and below-costs sales.

By selling certain lines of goods below cost for a prolonged period, large retailers can force small

businesses to close. Consumers ultimately suffer; once competitors have been eliminated, prices are likely to rise. Increased monitoring and enforcement of state predatory pricing laws will help maintain fair and vigorous competition.

Economic development

Support and fund comprehensive downtown revitalization and small business development programs.

In many cases, state economic development programs are focused on trying to attract outside corporations. Very little attention is paid to helping small businesses expand and new entrepreneurs get started. States should direct more of their economic development resources toward local business development. They also should establish comprehensive downtown revitalization programs and review state infrastructure and transportation policies to ensure they do not undermine the health and vitality of downtowns.

Eminent domain

Restrict the use of eminent domain to truly legitimate and necessary public purposes.

Eminent domain – the power of government to take private property for public use (such as the construction of a school), provided the owner receives fair market value – has been abused with increasing frequency in recent years. There have been numerous cases in this nation in which local governments have seized homes and small businesses, not for legitimate public uses, but rather to transfer the property to a chain retail developer.

Income tax

Reform state tax policies that place small businesses at a competitive disadvantage by allowing multi-state corporations to evade all or part of their state corporate income tax liability.

More than half the states have loopholes in their tax codes that enable multi-state retail chains to evade paying income taxes on all or part of profits earned at stores in those states. Small businesses with all of their operations in one state cannot take advantage of these loopholes and must pay taxes on all of their earnings. Sixteen states have eliminated this competitive imbalance by adopting a policy known as combined reporting.

See Policy P.20.3 on encouraging small business development.

<p>Regional cooperation</p> <p>Provide incentives to encourage neighboring communities to collaborate on land use planning; to develop a joint process for reviewing developments of regional impact, including large-scale retail projects; and to implement tax-base sharing.</p> <p>Competition for tax base among neighboring communities and the lack of a regional approach to land use planning has led to massive over-building of big-box stores in most areas of the country. Many large retail projects are approved without any consideration of regional impacts, including vacancies in downtowns and other shopping centers. Developers often play neighboring towns against one another to exact tax breaks and other concessions. One solution is increased cooperation among neighboring communities through regional land use planning, development review, and tax-base sharing.</p> <p>Sales tax</p> <p>Endorse state participation in the National Governors Association's Streamlined Sales Tax Project if applicable.</p> <p>Federal policy largely exempts internet and mail order from collecting state and local sales taxes. This policy gives out-of-state companies a 5-8 percent price advantage over local stores. Some three dozen states are participating in the Streamlined Sales Tax Project, which is working to simplify and align state and local tax regulations. This will largely eliminate the difficulty of complying with the varying regulations governing the nation's 7,600 state and local tax jurisdictions, thereby paving the way for Congress to lift the tax exemption on internet and mail order sales.</p> <p>Subsidies</p> <p>Prohibit cities and state agencies from providing development subsidies and tax incentives, including tax increment financing, for projects that are more than one-third retail, with the exception of downtown revitalization projects and redevelopment of blighted low-income neighborhoods (defined as those in which the poverty rate is 30 percent or more) suffering from a demonstrable lack of retail services.</p> <p>Cities commonly provide tax breaks and other kinds of subsidies to underwrite the development of big-box retail stores. Wal-Mart, for example, has</p>	<p>See Chapter 11: Statement of Coordination.</p>
--	---

<p>received over \$1 billion in public subsidies from state and local governments, according a report by Good Jobs First. These subsidies not only create an uneven playing field for independent businesses, but studies have found that big-box stores produce no real growth in the local economy and actually eliminates as many jobs as they create.</p> <p>Planning and Zoning Policy</p> <p>Enact planning and zoning policies that support downtowns, encourage the proliferation of independent businesses, and discourage or limit big-box sprawl.</p> <p>Cities should adopt planning policies, such as store size caps and economic impact standards, which discourage commercial sprawl. Planning policies should support and encourage small-scale, community-serving businesses that locate downtown or in established neighborhood business districts.</p> <p>Local</p> <p>Downtown revitalization</p> <p>Develop a long-range, comprehensive downtown revitalization and small business development plan, and ensure that transportation and infrastructure policies support the downtown.</p> <p>Cities should focus their economic development resources on creating and expanding small businesses, and they should develop long-range plans to revitalize their downtowns. Transportation, infrastructure, and other municipal policies should support the downtown. Pedestrian improvements should be part of transportation planning, for example, and public buildings, such as libraries should be located in the downtown area, and schools, should be located in or near the downtown if feasible.</p> <p>Subsidies</p> <p>Adopt a policy barring the use of subsidies and tax breaks for retail development with the exception of downtown revitalization projects and redevelopment of blighted low-income neighborhoods (defined as those in which the poverty rate is 30 percent or more) suffering from a demonstrable lack of retail services.</p> <p>Cities commonly provide tax breaks and other kinds of subsidies to underwrite the development of big-</p>	<p>See the Fiscal Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy.</p> <p>See the Regulatory Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy, specifically “Development Predictability Map.”</p> <p>See the Regulatory Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy, specifically “Development Predictability Map.”</p>
--	---

<p>box retail stores. Wal-Mart, for example, has received over \$1 billion in public subsidies from state and local governments, according to a report by Good Jobs First. These subsidies not only create an uneven playing field for independent businesses, but studies have found that big-box stores produce no real growth in the local economy and actually eliminate as many jobs as they create.</p> <p>Developers rules</p> <p>Local media coverage as well as concerned residents on behalf of Lake Protection Zoning, for example, indicates there is a dire need for the enforcement of remedy against growing violations on behalf of developers/contractors/builders n not practicing ethical responsibility. A growing number of vital concern is the fact that developers and/or trophy home builders with vast amounts of money are willing to pay fines imposed upon them for non-compliance – then proceed as they please. Not only is this irresponsible, but also very counter-productive and presently needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Developers must strictly comply with ordinances, rules, regulations set forth in the Growth Policy, and Zoning Ordinances. Collectively, fines amounting to 10% or greater of the initial selling price of the structures and complete compliance will be enforced as remedy. While this may sound harsh, I believe there are folks out there who are moving to the valley, and who don't happen to see any amount of money as an object when it comes to doing as they please, and that is sad indeed.</p>	<p>See the Fiscal Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy.</p> <p>Per Section 76-1-605(1a), MCA, this is a non-regulatory document. Enforcement would be addressed in subsequent documents such as zoning regulations.</p>
<p>With the growth of our Valley, we have also experienced a consolidation of services. With the major stores and medical services being consolidated in Kalispell. This leaves the citizens in the bordering communities at a disadvantage.</p>	<p>See Chapter 11: Statement of Coordination.</p>
<p>Revitalizing close-in county neighborhoods and commercial areas like Evergreen would be cost effective. Taxable valuations would stabilize or grow while infrastructure would be maximized and compact to service.</p>	<p>See the Regulatory Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy, specifically “Market-Based voluntary transfer or adjustment of development rights.</p>
<p><u>Chapter 5 Flathead Economy</u></p> <p>Add “services” to G.21. The infrastructure that supports business is more than physical things like roads and sewer systems. It is also services like medical care and education.</p>	<p>Revise G.21 to include services.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PAGE 54 – P.20.1 –Add “and industrial” after “commercial”. 2. PAGE 53 – P.20.3 –Add “employment and” after “provide”. 3. PAGE 60 & 61 – In looking at the last paragraph on page 60 and Figure 5.6 on 	<p>Revise P.20.1 to include industrial uses.</p> <p>See recommended revision to P.20.3 above. That delineation has not been made.</p>

<p>page 61, I wondered if the gap between Flathead wages and the national averages was due to local wages being lower by industry or because of a disproportionate number of jobs in lower paying industries in the Flathead. If the answer to this is known it should be included in the text.</p> <p>4. PAGE 62 – The data presented does not support the concluding sentence in the first paragraph. With a majority of residents having some education beyond high school, lack of education would not seem to be a factor. There is no evidence presented that there is a gender gap, unless you are referring to women holding more jobs in higher paying fields. It may very well be that the reason the jobs are unfilled is that the salaries offered are too low. If that is the case, then employers will slowly raise the offered wage in order to fill the position. They will become willing to pay more as they realize the cost of having the position unfilled. In the absence of an analysis of the vacant positions and the offered wages it is unwise to draw conclusions.</p> <p>5. PAGE 65 – PART 5 –The last sentence indicates that private markets are solely responsible for a sustainable economy in the Flathead. That may be largely true, but it ignores the influence of government. Successful efforts by the county in recruiting specific industries can have an enormous effect on the local economy. This should be mentioned.</p> <p>Revise paragraph 3 of the INTRODUCTION as follows:</p> <p>THE RAPID POPULATION GROWTH DETAILED IN CHAPTER 3 HAS BEEN POSITIVE FOR THE AREA ECONOMY BUT ALSO BRINGS A PRICE TAG. WHILE SHEER GROWTH IN NUMBERS MAY NUDGE THE ECONOMY, IT IS THE NATURE OF THE GROWTH THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT. THE ATTRACTION OF OLDER, WORKING, FINANCIALLY ESTABLISHED ADULTS TO THE FLATHEAD HAS HAD THE MOST EFFICACIOUS EFFECT. BUT GROWTH PER SE BROMGS ACCOMPANYING COSTS: OVERBURDENED SCHOOLS, CROWDED COURTS AND INCARCERATION FACILITIES, OVERBURDENED COUNTY DEPARTMENTS FROM SHERIFF TO PLANNING, ROADS THAT ARE CHOKED WITH TRAFFIC, THE WEAKENING OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND</p>	<p>In the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 62, remove “in addition to the gender gap in employment.”</p> <p>Staff believes that this is addressed in the sentence.</p> <p>Staff disagrees with comment.</p>
---	---

<p>TIMBER INDUSTRIES, THE NEED FOR COSTLY INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION AND SPRAWL. TIME AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES HAVE RESULTED IN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INCOMES AND JOB GROWTH, BUT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE IS THE WHOLE PICTURE.</p> <p>Reason for the revision: The Growth Policy must be guided by reality rather than an assessment that could have been written by the Chamber of Commerce. To be credible, an economic review must be balanced.</p> <p>Comment on POLICY P.20.1 vis a vis POLICY P.20.6, Draft page 54: If the county does too much of P.20.1 it will not be able to accomplish P.20.6. And if P.20.6 cannot be accomplished, P.20.1 is meaningless.</p> <p>Modify GOAL G.21, Draft page 54, as follows:</p> <p>WORK CLOSELY WITH CITY GOVERNMENTS TO CREATE AVAILABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND ADEQUATE...</p> <p>Reason for modification: The cities have much of what the county needs to accomplish this goal. It is inefficient and costly to taxpayers to work at cross purposes with the cities. If the county becomes a de facto city/county it will quickly destroy that which makes the county attractive.</p> <p>Modify POLICY P.21.2, Draft page 55, as follows:</p> <p>PROMOTE BUSINESS CENTERS AND INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN AREAS SERVED BY SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE WITH CONSIDERATION TO PROXIMITY TO POPULATION DENSITIES, AND DISCOURAGE THE CHAINING OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG ROADS AND HIGHWAYS.</p> <p>Reason for modification: The sprawl along roads and highways is turning Flathead County into "Anywhere USA" and smacks of an absence of intelligent planning. It also eliminates the buffer between towns that preserves their distinctive character. The Growth Policy ought to make a clear statement against this practice.</p> <p>Historically our economy has been based on the timber industry and it is past time to start MANAGING our forests again. The county could have a big part in this happening if they had the courage to stand up to the Federal Government.</p>	<p>Concern addressed by term "adequate" in P.20.1.</p> <p>See Chapter 11: Statement of Coordination.</p> <p>See Regulatory Implementation section of Chapter 9: Implementation Strategy, specifically "Development Predictability Map."</p> <p>Refer to Goal G.3.</p>
--	---

The Feds believe that fire is good – soon all the tourists will have to look is a moonscape and burnt sticks. Where will our economy be then?	
I've been in valley all my life. Until I left and came back, I didn't realize how much it changed. The growth policy will determine the area for my life and my children's lives. It is essential that guidelines shift so that we have development and re-development. We need buffers on the highways to preserve scenic space. The cities and county must work together to avoid hog-pog development. We need high paying jobs. There is an excess of mini wage jobs and I can tell you from experience, you cannot live on that. I ask in making your decision please take into consideration those of us who want to call the Flathead Valley our home.	Refer to Goal G.20.
Traditional farming is in crisis. The county needs to encourage new ways and methods of farming.	Refer to Policy 20.2.
Draft Policy 20.6 page 54 THE FLATHEAD ECONOMY CHAPTER 5: Preservation of the natural amenities which characterize the county in order to attract the development of high-value, low-impact type industries, maintain the high quality of life which attracts visitors and new residents, and sustain the tourist sector of the economy. ADDITIONAL POLICY Adapted from the Sierra Nevada Business Council: Prioritize the conservation and showcasing of natural assets in order to support the economic viability of the county.	No change needed.
DRAFT GROWTH POLICY: <u>FLATHEAD ECONOMY 5</u>	
Draft Growth Policy 20.2 Page 54 THE FLATHEAD ECONOMY CHAPTER 5 <i>Develop methods to maintain a sustainable agricultural industry through community-based incentives for farmers to continue agricultural activities.</i>	
<u>RECOMMENDATIONS:</u> Add new policies to strengthen Policy 20.2 of the proposed growth policy. <u>Add (New) Policy:</u> <i>Implement programs which will assist the business of agriculture. Programs may include establishing Agricultural Enterprise Zones which could provide incentives for farmers to invest in new buildings and equipment, encouraging a renewed interest in the field and the creation of a land bank that could hold and sell development rights in support of programs like a transfer development right program.</i> (Adapted from policies submitted to the county planning office and recommended for inclusion in the county growth policy by Flathead County Friends of Agriculture)	No change needed.

<p><u>Add (New) Policy:</u> <i>Give priority to establishing infrastructure and opportunities to increase value-added agricultural products and permanent processing and marketing facilities for meat and other agricultural products in the Flathead including securing funding sources on the state and national level.</i> (adapted from policies submitted to the county planning office and recommended for inclusion in the county growth policy by Flathead County Friends of Agriculture)</p>	<p>Refer to recommended policy P.4.10.</p>
<p>Policy 20.6 Page 54 THE FLATHEAD ECONOMY CHAPTER 5 <i>Preservation of the natural amenities which characterize the county in order to attract the development of high-value, low-impact type industries, maintain the high quality of life which attracts visitors and new residents, and sustain the tourist sector of the economy.</i></p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS: Add new policies to strengthen Policy 20.6 of the proposed growth policy.</p> <p><u>Add (New) Policy:</u> <i>Prioritize the conservation and showcasing of natural assets in order to support the economic viability of the county.</i> (Adapted from the Sierra Nevada Business Council)</p>	<p>No change needed.</p>
<p><u>Add (New) Policy:</u> <i>Industrial uses should be grouped together to concentrate negative impacts and to aid in the provision of services as opposed to being indiscriminately scattered throughout the County.</i> (from 1987 Flathead County Growth Policy Chapter 5, Page 23, Policy 5.21)</p>	<p>Refer to Goal G.5.</p>
<p>Promote business centers and industrial parks in areas served by sufficient infrastructure with consideration to proximity to population densities.</p> <p>REPLACEMENT POLICY Adapted from the 1987 Flathead County Growth Policy Chapter 21 Page 23 Policy 5.21: Business centers and industrial parks should be grouped together to concentrate negative traffic impacts and to aid in the provision of services in close proximity to population densities as opposed to being indiscriminately scattered throughout the County.</p> <p>ADDITONAL POLICY Adapted from Pacer County, CA General Plan Land Use Chapter Policy 1.D.5: The County shall encourage existing and new downtowns/village centers to provide a variety of goods and services, both public and private.</p>	<p>No change needed. See policy on rural commercial nodes.</p>